

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 04629 01 OF 02 251008Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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R 250753Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6900
SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4629

SECDEF FOR OASD/ISA
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, IS, US
SUBJECT: JANKA MEETING WITH WEIZMAN

SUMMARY: IN A RELAXED AND INFORMAL (BUT NONETHELESS POINTED) CONVERSATION WITH DASD JANKA, DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN SAID SOME ISRAELIS FELT SOME UNEASE ABOUT ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WOULD ISRAEL GET WHAT IT FELT WAS REQUIRED FOR ITS DEFENSE? JANKA EXPLAINED THAT CHANGES IN WASHINGTON HAD SLOWED DOWN DECISION-MAKING BUT THE PRINCIPLE OF SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL REMAINED. WEAPONS SUPPLY CAN RAISE POLITICAL AS WELL AS HARDWARE PROBLEMS. WEIZMAN EMPHASIZED THAT THE THREAT ISRAEL FACED HAD INCREASED IN THE LAST YEAR; THE ARABS WERE BETTER ARMED THAN BEFORE AND HAD ENGAGED IN SOME RECENT SABER RATTLING. THEY COULD ALSO BE UNPREDICTABLE, AND MIGHT BE TEMPTED IF THEY FELT THE U.S. WAS BACKING AWAY FROM ITS PROMISES TO ISRAEL. WEIZMAN SAID HE HAD NO DEFINITE PLANS TO VISIT WASHINGTON BUT WOULD COME AT ANY TIME HIS PRESENCE WAS CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO DISCUSS "REAL PROBLEMS." END SUMMARY.

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JANKA MET
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 04629 01 OF 02 251008Z

WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE WEIZMAN JUNE 24. CHARGE AND DEFENSE ATTACHES WERE PRESENT, AS WAS MOD DIRECTOR GENERAL ZUSSMAN AND MAJOR GENERAL INBAR, ATTACHE-DESIGNATE TO WASHINGTON.

2. WEIZMAN BEGAN THE CONVERSATION, WHICH HE CONDUCTED IN A VERY INFORMAL MANNER, BY SAYING THAT THERE WAS A

FEELING AMONG SOME ISRAELIS, INCLUDING IN THE ARMED FORCES, THAT THE "SCREWS MAY BE TIGHTENING" IN REGARD TO RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WHILE NOT EMPHASIZING THE POINT, HE SAID THAT THERE WAS "A BIT OF UNQUIET" ON THE SURFACE, BASICALLY BROUGHT ABOUT BY DOUBT WHETHER THE U.S. WOULD AGREE WITH WHAT ISRAEL THOUGHT IT REQUIRED FOR ITS DEFENSE. HE ADDED THAT THE MINISTRY WAS NOW PREPARING TO BRIEF THE PRIME MINISTER ON THE "SHOPPING LIST" OF MILITARY ITEMS WHICH HE WILL BE DISCUSSING IN WASHINGTON. THE MAIN QUESTION, HOWEVER, WAS WHETHER THERE WOULD BE CHANGES IN THE SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP THE ISRAELI FORCES HAVE HAD WITH THE U.S. AND, IF THERE WERE, HOW BEST ISRAEL COULD ABSORB THEM.

3. JANKA RESPONDED TO THIS BY SAYING THAT HE HAD EXPLAINED TO CHIEF OF STAFF GUR THAT CHANGING ADMINISTRATIONS THIS TIME INVOLVED SOME VERY REAL CHANGES. THERE WAS A LEARNING CURVE WHICH HAD TO BE MASTERED. NEW PEOPLE HAD MOVED INTO KEY POSITIONS IN WASHINGTON IN RECENT MONTHS AND WERE TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT VARIOUS REQUESTS. HE ASSUMED THAT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN DURING HIS VISIT JUST AS THEY HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH HIS PREDECESSOR.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 04629 01 OF 02 251008Z

4. WEIZMAN INTERRUPTED TO ASK WHAT THE U.S. CONCEPT WAS AS TO THE FUTURE OF THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE. WHAT AND WHY, WEAPONS-WISE? WHAT COMES AFTER THE F-15? HOW FAR CAN WE GO IN CO-PRODUCTION?

5. JANKA DID NOT ADDRESS THESE QUESTIONS DIRECTLY BUT STRESSED THAT THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN OUR DETERMINATION TO SUPPORT ISRAEL. IT WAS WELL UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON THAT WE WERE GOING TO HELP THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE REMAIN ONE OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD. IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT THERE WOULD BE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND TEL AVIV AS TO WHAT WAS REQUIRED FOR ISRAELI SECURITY. WE HAVE MOVED BEYOND THE 1974 PERIOD WHEN IT WAS NECESSARY TO REPLACE ISRAELI LOSSES AND TO HELP BUILD UP THE IDF. THE DECISIONS IN THOSE DAYS WERE RELATIVELY EASY ONES. NOW WE ARE MOVING INTO A PERIOD OF MORE COMPLEX TECHNOLOGY AND ONE IN WHERE NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE THREAT WILL LOOK LIKE FIVE YEARS IN THE FUTURE.

6. WEIZMAN TURNED TO ZUSSMAN AND ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. ZUSSMAN MENTIONED ONLY THE

GRUMMAN HYDROFOIL, OF WHICH THE ISRAELI NAVY WANTED TWO. THERE HAD NOT YET BEEN APPROVAL FOR SUBCONTRACTING THEIR CONSTRUCTION TO AN ISRAELI COMPANY.

7. JANKA NOTED THAT THESE ISSUES ARE NOT SIMPLE HARDWARE PROBLEMS. THE U.S. MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES, ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT AWARE OF THE EXACT STATUS OF THE HYDROFOIL CASE.

8. WEIZMAN INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT THIS GENERAL SUBJECT COULD BE DISCUSSED WHEN HE WAS IN WASHINGTON, ALTHOUGH HE INDICATED HE HAD NO DEFINITE PLANS TO TRAVEL THERE AT THIS TIME. HE THEN CHANGED THE SUBJECT TO SAY (TWICE) THAT HE BELIEVED THE THREAT ISRAEL WAS FACING WAS GREATER THAN LAST
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TEL AV 04629 01 OF 02 251008Z

YEAR. IT WAS NOW THE ELEVENTH YEAR AFTER THE 1967 WAR AND THE FOURTH AFTER THE YOM KIPPUR WAR. THE ARABS DO NOT KNOW HOW TO READ THE CHANGES OF ADMINISTRATION IN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. THE PARTY WAS CONSIDERED HAWKISH, WRONGLY HE BELIEVED. HE PREFERRED TO SEE IT AS A PARTY WHICH TAKES A DIFFERENT APPROACH AND WHICH TALKS PLAINLY. IN ANY CASE HE FELT THAT ISRAEL WAS APPROACHING A MORE SENSITIVE PERIOD. THERE HAD BEEN SOME SABER RATTLING BY THE ARABS; IT WAS NO SECRET THAT ARABS COULD SOMETIMES BE UNPREDICTABLE. FROM WHAT HE HAD LEARNED, HE BELIEVED THAT THE ARABS HAVE REORGANIZED, RE-EQUIPPED AND RETRAINED AND THAT THE MIDDLE EAST WAS APPROACHING A STAGE WHERE BOTH SIDES HAD BIGGER AND

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 04629 02 OF 02 251026Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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OMB-01 IGA-02 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 MC-02 AID-05 /073 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6901

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4629

SECDEF FOR OASD/ISA

BETTER FORCES THAN IN 1973.

9. JANKA COMMENTED THAT THE INCREASING TENSION WAS APPRECIATED IN WASHINGTON. WEIZMAN SAID THAT HE WAS CONCERNED THAT IF THE ARABS FELT THAT THE U.S. WAS BACKING AWAY FROM ITS PROMISES TO ISRAEL THEY COULD BE TEMPTED. JANKA COUNTERED THAT THE U.S. FACED A REAL DILEMMA: HOW TO SUPPORT ISRAEL MILITARILY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME NOT JEOPARDIZING THE CHANCES FOR SOME MOVEMENT TOWARD PEACE.

10. WEIZMAN MENTIONED THE SYLVANIA-TADIRAN PROBLEM. JANKA SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT ISRAEL'S SUPPORTERS "UNFORTUNATELY BRING THIS SORT OF PROBLEM ON YOU" BY SURFACING IT IN THE MEDIA. FIGHTING A BATTLE AGAINST THE PENTAGON IN THE PRESS DOESN'T HELP ISRAEL WITH ITS SECURITY, NOR DOES IT HELP THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

11. WEIZMAN SAID HE AGREED AND THEN CHANGED THE SUBJECT TO A POSSIBLE VISIT TO WASHINGTON. HE WOULD LIKE TO STAY IN ISRAEL FOR THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 04629 02 OF 02 251026Z

TIME BEING SINCE HE HAD MANY VISITS TO MAKE HERE TO AREAS AND TO UNITS. HOWEVER, IF HIS PRESENCE SHOULD EVER BE REQUIRED IN WASHINGTON FOR "REAL BUSINESS" HE WOULD COME AT ONCE. HE ADDED THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO BE "OVER THERE" IF THE BALLOON WENT UP. EVEN THOUGH HE COULD BE BACK WITHIN 24 HOURS, A LOT COULD HAPPEN IN THAT PERIOD.

12. JANKA THEN ASKED WHETHER IN HIS FEW DAYS IN OFFICE WEIZMAN HAD ANY SENSE OF CHANGING PRIORITIES. THE MINISTER REPLIED THAT HE DID HAVE. AS AN EXAMPLE HE SAID HE WAS THINKING A GOOD DEAL ABOUT WEAPONS, MENTIONING THE STRIKE HELICOPTER. COL. JARRETT(SOD/ISA/NESA) THEN MADE THE POINT THAT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE PENTAGON TO HAVE A THOROUGH JUSTIFICATION FOR A PIECE OF HARDWARE WHEN IT WAS REQUESTED. WEIZMAN SAID HE AGREED, THAT BUYING WEAPONS WAS NOT LIKE GOING INTO MACY'S AND TAKING THINGS OFF THE SHELF. HE THEN SAID HE HAD BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE TRADE-OFF BETWEEN STRIKE AIRCRAFT AND STRIKE HELICOPTERS. HE WAS ALSO

CONSIDERING THE PROBLEM OF KILLING TANKS WITH
HELICOPTERS, ESPECIALLY IF IT TOOK A 2 1/2 MILLION
DOLLAR COBRA FOR EACH KILL.

13. IN CONCLUDING, WEIZMAN SAID THAT HE DID NOT SEE
MUCH MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL ON
MILITARY ISSUES - EXCEPT IF IT WOULD BE AT A HIGH
POLITICAL LEVEL. THE THREAT IN THE SURROUNDING
COUNTRIES MEANT THAT THE U.S. SHOULD CONTINUE
TO KEEP ISRAEL STRONG: "ISRAEL DOES NOT WANT TO BE
SAVED BY THE SIXTH FLEET." JANKA SAID THAT HE DID
NOT THINK THIS WOULD BE NECESSARY AND ASKED WHETHER
WEIZMAN DID NOT BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL HAD THE BEST ARAB
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 04629 02 OF 02 251026Z

LEADERS TO DEAL WITH IN RECENT MEMORY. WEIZMAN SNORTED:
"AND THEY HAVE THE BEST ISRAELIS TO DEAL WITH".

14. COMMENT: THE DEFENSE MINISTER WAS RELAXED AND
INFORMAL WITH HIS MIND DARTING FROM SUBJECT TO SUBJECT.
HE SEEMS TO BE RELISHING HIS JOB AND MENTIONED HOW HARD
HIS AIDES WERE WORKING HIM AND VICE VERSA. HIS COMMENTS
WOULD INDICATE THAT HE WILL GET MUCH DEEPER INTO HARD-
WARE ITEMS THAN DID HIS PREDECESSOR. HIS LIGHT-
HEARTED AND BANTERING MANNER CAN BE DECEPTIVE, FOR
HIS AGILE MIND MOVES QUICKLY FROM ONE SUBJECT TO
ANOTHER AND BACK AGAIN- BUT HE GETS HIS POINT ACROSS.
WHATEVER ELSE IT WILL BE, THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WILL
NOT BE A DULL PLACE WITH EZER WEIZMAN AROUND.
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Message Attributes

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